

Opening Statement
The Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife
Thursday, March 19, 2008

H.R. 1080, the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2009

The Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife meets this morning to hear testimony regarding H.R. 1080, the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2009.

The United States demonstrates strong leadership in fisheries management both nationally and internationally. However, despite these efforts, over seventy percent of global marine fish stocks are exploited or depleted, which is driven in part by the persistence of illegal, unreported, and unregulated, or IUU, fishing.

With an annual global value of over \$10 billion dollars, IUU fishing undermines the United States' fisheries management efforts and its fishermen, as well as efforts to sustainably manage fisheries in other countries. Unsustainable fishing practices by foreign fishing fleets adversely affect stocks that migrate between the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (the EEZ) and the high seas. This problem can be particularly acute in places like Guam, where the EEZ is vast, and where the United States Coast Guard, despite its best efforts, will never have sufficient resources to patrol all of our waters.

As a result, IUU fishermen are "free riders" who benefit unfairly from the sacrifices made by U.S. fishermen and others for the sake of proper fisheries conservation and management. Congress made some changes in the Magnuson-Stevens Act in 2006 to help contend with the growing problem of IUU fishing, directing the Secretary of Commerce to produce a biennial report describing actions taken at an international level to tackle IUU fishing and the by-catch of protected living marine resources. I received a copy of this report earlier this year and noted that the countries of France, Italy, Libya, Panama, China, and Tunisia were listed as having vessels engaged in IUU fishing. I look forward to hearing how consultations with these nations progress.

At last year's hearing, however, I heard that NOAA, the State Department, and the United States Coast Guard felt they needed additional tools to address IUU fishing. My bill, the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2009, provides some of those tools. It would strengthen and improve the enforcement authorities of various U.S. fisheries Acts and would authorize an international cooperation and assistance program to help other countries develop the technical expertise to confront IUU fishing.

I am pleased to have five Subcommittee Members, Mr. Faleomavaega, Mr. Abercrombie, Mr. Sablan, Mrs. Christensen, and Mrs. Capps, as co-sponsors of H.R.

1080 and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about the need for this legislation to combat IUU fishing.